

## RURAL SOCIETY PLANS TO BUY KING CAESAR HOUSE FOR MUSEUM

At a meeting of the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society held on April 26 it was announced by the Society's Pres. William Nash that the historic "King Caesar House" on Powder Point had been offered for sale for some time by the owners. He added that during the course of the winter, people from various parts of the town had expressed to him and other officers of the Society very much the same feelings in regard to this property. This mutual thought was that a rare opportunity had presented itself to acquire for the Society, if it seemed financially possible, this beautiful and historic house opposite King Caesar's wharf now owned and maintained by the Society as a memorial park. It would become a landmark commemorative of the busy ship building days of Duxbury from Colonial times.

Accordingly, several months ago, a group of Duxbury people met to discuss this matter. They were asked for their reaction as to whether or not steps be taken to secure this property, so that, with an endowment, it could be preserved permanently as an outstanding Duxbury landmark, to be owned, maintained and occupied as the Society's headquarters, for the citizens of Duxbury.

The response was most enthusiastic and unanimously favorable. A six-month's option to purchase was then obtained. Garvin Bawden of St. George St. has generously consented to head a committee of townspeople who will organize a fund raising drive to make this exciting venture a reality for Duxbury. The drive will be underway by early summer and reports of progress will be published in the clipper from time to time.

# DUXBURY CLIPPER

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## KING CAESAR

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not common south of Boston. This is an exceptionally fine example of the type.

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But what especially struck me about it was the date 1783 painted high on its south wall, for in 1783 there was no Washington st., no public road here at all. There wasn't until 1800.

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Yet there were houses on this Duxbury east shore before the public road, though that they were such mansions as this might be questioned. The sea, however, was the early highway, so the date may be all right.

The present owners, the Edwin Leonards, are nevertheless, doing some checking on it.

"Percy Walker thinks it ought to be 1803," Mrs. Leonard says and that veteran Duxbury realtor should come close to knowing.

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Now if you should ever come this way, don't fail to look to the house just across the street, on the Harrison-st. corner.

Great beauty and novelty are combined in it.

It is a square, white house of wonderful charm—a mansion with three almost identical facades, and with four great chimneys rising from it.

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But what you really want to see is its roof—the odd something rising out of what started out to

be an ordinary gambrel roof, but isn't. That "something" is perhaps an odd third story, or a mushroomed cupola.

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"Like an enclosed Widow's Walk," suggested a young man I talked with at architect Oliver Barker's office, down in Sodom, as the lower end of the village used to be called. I'd planned to ask Barker what name there might be for such a roof-style, but he was out.

The roof treatment is a rarity, yet not unique. I have seen a similar house in Tremont st. in the Millbrook area, where many Duxbury seafarers lived; and I have been told that there's yet a third in some nearby town, possibly Norwell.

But can there be another anywhere?

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From the height-of-land at the Village Store, Washington st. descends an easy slope to the crossing of the Bluefish river. A tablet near the bridge tells of tidal grist-mills that were there in olden times, but I saw nothing that mentioned the great Battle of the Bridge that once shook Duxbury town.

The shipbuilder-merchant Ezra Weston, or "King Caesar," as he was called, had his homestead and broad lands on Powder Point at the north of town, his shipyards at the south of it, and other growing interests in Duxbury's every nook and corner.

Together with a few influential friends, he had managed against strong opposition (it was farm against sea, and have-nots against haves) to get Washington st. laid out as a public road along the eastern shore—linking the outposts of his domain.

Almost linking them! But not quite. The townspeople refused to build a bridge here across the Bluefish river. So Washington st. ended on the south bank, and Powder Point was over on the other side.

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"A bridge will block naviga-

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tion," the opposition said. "And look what it will cost. Not a cent less than \$3000. The town can't stand it."

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Weston and his old friends Seth Sprague and Joshua Winsor and Samuel Delano (of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt tribe) now resorted to stratagem.

A proposition was put to Town Meeting. Let's build the bridge if it can be done for \$1500. And as everybody knew it couldn't be built for that, the "antis" weakened and the "ayes" carried the vote.

"That's the end of the bridge business," the opposition said, consoling itself.

Just then Joshua Winsor announced that he'd take the job at the figure named. The meeting was in February, 1803. The bridge was opened with great to-do on the following July 4, the four conspirators having shared the excess cost.

Before many years King Caesar's empire burgeoned gloriously on Powder Point.

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Gulls were huddled in the upper stream and a minor gale was coming down the valley as I crossed the Bluefish Bridge. The flag on a high staff nearby stood straight out as if starched, its colors bright in the sun.

At the first corner a building, once a drab, abandoned cable-station, is now a handsome dwelling. Before it was a cable-station it was a bank—Ezra Weston, president.

So I was now entering into "King Caesar's" special country.